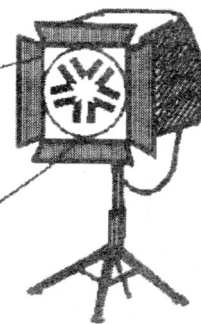


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

# Spotlight On Aging



VOLUME XVII, ISSUE 10

A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

December 2002

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



By E. Veronica Pace

Happy Holidays! During this holiday season, please be mindful of your health and the well being of others. It's during the holiday season that many feel the loss of loved ones most. Keep active, and visit friends and family.

Remember those individuals who have limited or no family in the area. Make a point to spend an afternoon with someone in need. This will do wonders for them and for you.

Think about caregivers, also. Allow them to spend some time with others and take care of their needs during this season. Caregiving can be a labor of love, but everyone needs a break. If you yourself can't get out, make more telephone calls than usual. Often it is hard to see that someone is in need.

We have some very useful information in this issue. Make sure you are prepared for any holiday weather. Winter can be a hazardous season for the elderly if you are not prepared.

We do not want you to hibernate, but do prepare yourself for remaining home and going out. Prepare for possible power outages because they are more dangerous for those who remain home, especially if you are not prepared with proper food, water and blankets to keep you warm.

In this issue, find out more about glaucoma, which when detected early can be treated. Like all medical appointments, make sure you make eye appointments yearly. We want to ensure all District seniors are safe and fit during the holidays.



**E. Veronica Pace, executive director of the D.C. Office on Aging; Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton; and Councilmember David A. Catania were honored by the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners Assembly for their support to the organization. The Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner's Assembly consists of a group of current and former Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners who have come together primarily for educational and charitable purposes intended to improve the overall impact and effectiveness of the ANC movement.**

## Winter Fire Safety for D.C. Residents

When Washington, D.C. residents think of winter, we often think of holiday parties, festive decorations and glowing fireplaces. What we may not realize is that December, January and February are the leading months for home fires and home fire deaths in the United States.

On average, more than one-third of U.S. home fire deaths occur during the winter months. From December 2001 through February 2002, four fatalities occurred in Washington, D.C., including members of our senior community.

Home heating fires are most commonly caused by inadequate chimney cleaning; placing things that can burn too close to portable heaters; fueling errors involving liquid- or gas-fueled heaters; and flaws in the design, installation or use of heating equipment.

"The good news is that most of these fires are preventable. It's just a matter of being aware that these hazards exist, and taking the necessary steps to prevent them," said Interim D.C. Fire and EMS Chief Adrian Thompson.

As the winter months approach, the District of Columbia Fire & EMS Department wants to encourage you and your family to practice winter fire safety by adopting the following safe practices:

**1.** Have your family develop a fire escape plan for your home, and practice it.

**2.** Make sure that all smoke detectors in your home have been cleaned. Replace batteries if necessary.

**3.** Have your furnace serviced. Keep combustibles (paint cans, oily rags and boxes) clear of furnaces and hot water heaters.

**4.** Check all appliance cords for fraying, cracks, loose prongs or plugs.

**5.** If you use a space heater, keep anything that can burn, including people, pets and furniture, at least three feet away. Make sure the cord is not frayed, and do not leave the heater unattended or sleep with it plugged in.

**6.** Never use your oven to heat your home.

**7.** If you have a fireplace, have the proper fireplace screens (glass or metal) to prevent sparks from jumping out. Before going to sleep, put the fire out and place hot ashes in a metal can, not a paper bag.

**8.** During snow storms, keep your address visible so that emergency personnel can see the address.

**10.** Keep dryer lint traps clean by removing lint after each cycle.

**11.** If you use candles during holiday celebrations, keep them and matches away from combustibles and children.

For further information on winter fire safety tips, you may call the D.C. Fire and EMS Fire Prevention Division at 202-727-1614.

 *Have a  
Wonderful  
Holiday  
Season!* 



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ANTHONY A. WILLIAMS, MAYOR



## D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER



## RSVP Volunteers Honored

Charlotte McConnell, Executive Director of Family and Child Services of Washington, D.C., Inc., is pictured with the female octogenarians who were honored at the recent Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Recognition Luncheon held at Bolling Air Force Base. Those honored have given

a total of more than 60,000 life-time volunteer hours.

This was one of many events held to honor more than 500 volunteers in the District of Columbia this year. In all, volunteers contributed over 110,000 hours of service to community service organizations, day care centers, hospitals, after-school pro-

grams, senior centers and many other organizations during the year. There are many volunteers who are in their 90s.

What a rewarding way to spend your life, volunteering to help others. Maybe this is how they stay young!

## Be Prepared for Winter Emergencies

Preparing for emergencies during the cold weather season is very important to older persons. As you get older, your body becomes less able to respond to long exposure to the cold.

Seniors should be mindful that hypothermia can be fatal. Hypothermia is a condition of below-normal body temperature — typically 95 degrees Fahrenheit or under. Hypothermia may occur in anyone who is exposed to severe cold without enough protection. Symptoms include a low temperature, sluggishness, slurred speech, slow breathing and confusion.

To avoid being the victim of hypothermia, dress warmly even when indoors, eat enough food, and stay as active as possible. Because hypothermia

may start while you are sleeping, keep warm in bed by wearing enough clothing and using blankets.

Also, neighbors and friends should check on each other and exchange emergency information that includes family members to contact, information about your primary doctor, and other important information.

This winter, think smart and prepare yourself for cold weather, icy conditions and circumstances where going out might not be possible. Start storing canned foods and non-perishable items, and keep bottled water and other items to sustain you until you can get out again. Make sure you include a non-electric can opener and items that you can eat without warming in case of power loss.

Also during the cold season, don't wait to the last minute to refill prescriptions. Fill them a week in advance, just in case weather and icy conditions make it unsafe to venture out.

During the snow season keep your shovel on a porch or inside so that it is easy to get to and you won't have to go down unshoveled steps or an unshoveled walkway to get to the shed or other place where shovels are often stored.

During extreme cold always keep your heat on so that pipes don't freeze up. A good temperature to keep your heat set on is 65 degrees or higher. These protective measures will help you endure the unbearable weather and keep you safe.

In case of a power outage, keep a battery-operated lamp or flashlight in a safe place. Candles can be dangerous. If you must use them, remember to keep them secure and away from flammable objects. Remember to keep additional, fresh batteries in case power is not restored right away.

Check to see if your neighbors are also experiencing a power outage. If you are the only one, call PEPCO (see numbers on coupon).

If a power outage occurs in your area, use a battery-powered radio to stay informed.

In the District of Columbia, the following stations are designated as Emergency Alerting System (EAS) radio stations: WTOP 1500 AM, WMAL 630 AM, WRC 570 AM and WKYS 93.9 FM.



## 'In the Arms of the Elders' Exhibit

Memorabilia from Myrtle Smith Gardiner Church's year as Ms. Senior D.C. 2001 and other artifacts are on exhibit at the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, 1901 Fort Place, S.E. The name of the exhibit is "In the Arms of the Elders."

The exhibit also features the faces of seniors documented by five local photographers and others. The exhibit may be seen throughout December, except Christmas Day, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Clip this out and place on your refrigerator.

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

**D.C. OFFICE ON AGING** .....(202) 724-5626

The Information and Assistance Office can link you with needed services. Open Monday through Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

**ENERGY OFFICE HOTLINE** .....(202) 673-6750

Available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for information and assistance with utilities.

### D.C. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

**AGENCY** .....(202) 727-6161

Provides information about shelters, blankets, heaters, oil and a health clinic nearest you. Open 24 hours, 7 days a week.

**HYPOTHERMIA HOTLINE** .....(202) 399-7093

.....(800) 535-7252

Provides information on emergency transportation, shelters and cold weather information. Open 24 hours, 7 days a week.

### POTOMAC ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY

**(PEPCO)** .....(202) 833-7500

**WASHINGTON GAS** .....(703) 750-1000

## It's not too late to get your flu shot!

Safeway will offer shots for **\$15**, free for Medicare recipients, at these two locations on December 7:

➤ 4865 MacArthur Blvd., N.W., from noon to 3 p.m.

➤ 1701 Corcoran St., N.W., from 3 to 6 p.m.

For more information on flu shots, call toll-free **(877) 895-5BUG**.

## D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

# Glaucoma: The Silent Thief of Sight

It is one of the sad facts of life that as we grow older, our eyesight deteriorates. Once we pass the age of approximately 40, the elasticity of the eyes' lenses starts to decrease, and focusing on near objects becomes more and more difficult.

We have all done the trick of holding a newspaper or a menu at arm's length in order to read it. By age 50, most of us need glasses for reading, if nothing else.

But even though our eyesight weakens with advancing years, growing old should not mean going blind. Modern advances in eye care mean that more and more Americans are enjoying better vision longer and longer.

But one danger to eyesight that can strike at any age is glaucoma, often called the "silent thief of sight."

Glaucoma is one of the most common causes of irreversible blindness. It has no symptoms, and it is incurable. Fortunately, glaucoma can be detected in its early, controllable stages by a simple series of screening tests.

Although the disease can hit anyone at any age, certain groups are at increased risk. African Ameri-

cans are at particularly high risk for glaucoma, struck by this devastating disease five to seven times more often than Caucasians.

People of Hispanic descent are also at higher risk. Persons suffering from diabetes or from high blood pressure are also at increased risk. Risk does increase with age, as well.

The Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus Foundation, Inc. is a foundation dedicated to providing free glaucoma screenings across the United States. The mission of The Friends Foundation is to work as the active arm of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus, a non-partisan organization of members of the United States Congress whose purpose is to educate all communities about the risks of glaucoma and other blindness-causing eye diseases. The caucus also provides diagnostic screening opportunities for high-risk glaucoma population groups across the nation.

The Congressional Glaucoma Caucus is dedicated to telling all Americans about this disease. "What we do at the Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma

Caucus Foundation is to set up and run glaucoma screenings at no cost to the participants," said S.J. "Bud" Grant, president of the Friends Foundation. "Of the most recent 500 individuals screened, we referred approximately 200 for further vision-related medical treatment."

Of that group, 63 displayed signs consistent with glaucoma — but because the disease was caught early, those men and women will retain their vision.

Added Grant, "Some 300 of the individuals most recently screened went home reassured that their eyes were normal."

The Congressional Glaucoma Caucus and the Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus Foundation are ready to set up glaucoma screenings in churches, senior centers, colleges, high schools, shopping malls or other venues anywhere in the United States.

To contact the Foundation and request a screening in your neighborhood, call (877) 611-4232 (toll free). Visit the Foundation's Web site at [www.glaucomacongress.org](http://www.glaucomacongress.org) to learn more.

## Mechanical Street Sweeping Suspended During Snow Season

### Drivers Given a Seasonal Break from Alternate-Side Parking Rules

The D.C. Department of Public Works has announced that weekly mechanical street cleaning operations will be suspended from January 6 to March 17, 2003. During this time, "No Parking/Street Cleaning" restrictions will also be lifted. Residents and visitors who park along posted, alternate-side street sweeping routes will not be required to move their cars on street-sweeping days during the sweeper hiatus.

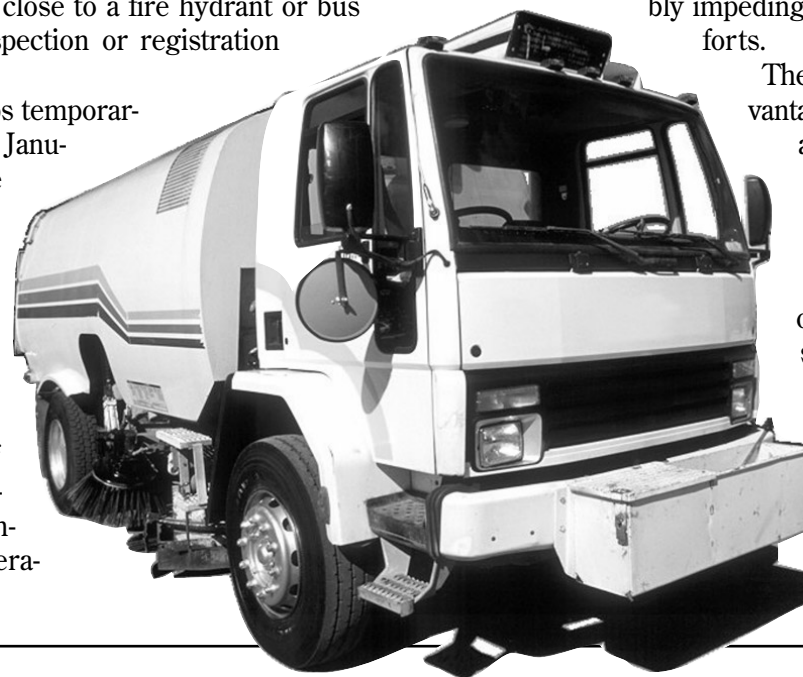
Further, no citations will be issued for the specific infraction of parking in a street-cleaning zone for

those 10 weeks. Other parking restrictions, however, remain in effect and will be enforced, including those for rush hour, overtime parking in a residential zone, parking too close to a fire hydrant or bus stop, and expired inspection or registration stickers.

Street cleaning stops temporarily every year during January, February and the first half of March — traditionally the coldest months of the year. DPW officials explained that the large street-sweeping machinery spreads a thin layer of water under its rotating brushes throughout the cleaning opera-

tion. During sub-freezing weather, the water-cleaning method becomes impractical — creating hazardous driving conditions, and possibly impeding snow removal efforts.

The city will take advantage of any comparatively warm days during the winter to catch up on street cleaning. The sweepers will operate on an unscheduled basis without parking restrictions when weather conditions permit.



### Free 'Talking Books' Available

Older readers with visual handicaps or physical handicaps can enjoy books through a national campaign called "Take a Talking Book."

Best-selling books, biographies, classics, mysteries, romances, westerns, poetry books, non-fiction and magazines can be enjoyed by all persons with the help of "Talking Books."

Talking Books is a free service of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Reading materials and machines are sent to borrowers and returned to the library by postage-free mail. The program will end in April 2003. For more information, call 202-727-2142.



### Christmas Tree Disposal

The D.C. Department of Public Works will conduct its special curbside holiday tree pick-up, for one week only, from January 6 through 10, 2003.

Trees and wreaths should be placed in front of the home by Sunday, January 5. Any trees not set out for collection that week should be placed with residents' trash on the regularly scheduled collection day.



## D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

# Community Calendar

## December events

### 3rd • 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Do you need a special or unique gift for the holidays? The Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service is hosting an arts and crafts show and sale. The event will be held at center, 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E., 202-678-2800.

### 6th • 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

See the "Christmas Spectacular" with the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall. Join the Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service center as they travel to the Big Apple to see this exciting holiday musical stage show. Cost is \$80 and includes transportation and tickets to the show. Lunch is on your own. The bus will leave from 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. For reservations, call 202-678-2800.

### 6th

A special matinee performance for seniors of *Christmas 365: A Holiday Musical Stage Play* will be held on December 13th at 1 p.m. This one-time only musical will be held at the historic Lincoln Theatre for \$10. Tickets must be purchased by December 6 through Project Keen, 202-388-4280. Hurry and reserve your reduced admission today.

### 10th

Visit the Lincoln Theatre with the Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service for an exciting dance program presented by Ricones & Company. Transportation and entrance to show is free; however pre-registration is required. Call 202-678-2800 to register and to find out departure and return times. The bus will leave from the center at 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E.

### 11th • 1 p.m.

Join the workshop "Alcohol and Drug Abuse During the Holidays" presented by the Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service. It follows a November workshop, "Depression During the Holidays." This free lecture will be held at 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. For more details, call 202-678-2800.

### 11th

The YMCA Senior Leisure Travelers will take a trip to the Sight and Sound in Lancaster, Pa., to see the Miracle of Christmas. Cost \$81. To reserve your seat, call Doris Baylor at 202-581-4007.

### 12th • 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Go to the Charles Town Races with Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service. You don't

have to be a gambler to enjoy this fun trip. Enjoy the round-trip transportation, the slots and the all-you-can-eat buffet for just \$12, with a \$5 rebate. The bus will leave from the center at 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. For more information, call 202-678-2800.

### 12th • 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Join the Greater Washington Urban League, Inc., Division of Aging Services on a trip to Midway Slots in Delaware. The bus departs from 2900 Newton St., N.E. Call Vivian Grayton for more information and tickets at 202-529-8701.

### 12th • 11:15 a.m.

The Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus Foundation presents a "Glaucoma Kick-Off" at the Washington Seniors Wellness Center, 3001 Alabama Ave., S.E. Members only are invited to attend this event, which will include speakers and information on glaucoma screening. For more information, contact Claudette at 202-581-9355.

### 13th • 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The Washington Seniors Wellness Center will host its annual holiday celebration. This event will be held at St. Luke's Catholic Church Hall, 4925 East Capitol St., S.E. Tickets are \$20. For further information, call 202-581-9355.

### 14th • 10:30 am

Join a roundtable discussion as the elder citizens of Southeast Washington, D.C., recall earlier times, family values and community traditions. The event will be held at the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, 1901 Fort Place, S.E. Participants are encouraged to bring photographs, documents and artifacts to share. For more information, call 202-287-2061.

### 18th • 11:30 a.m.

The Washington Seniors Wellness Center and Ann Bears Elementary School will host an intergenerational holiday concert at 3001 Alabama Ave., S.E. For details about this concert, call 202-581-9355.

### 19th • 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Mayor Anthony A. Williams and the D.C. Office on Aging will present the Annual Seniors' Holiday Celebration at the D.C. Armory. Call today for free tickets, 202-724-5622.

### 23rd and 24th • 9:30 a.m.

The Washington Seniors Wellness Center presents a "Jingle Jam" workout. Wear your jingle bells to this aerobic workout. The event is free and held at 3001 Alabama Ave., S.E. Register by calling 202-

581-9355.

### 27th • 10 a.m.

Try out holiday line dancing with the Washington Seniors Wellness Center. This free event will be held at 3001 Alabama Ave., S.E. For information, call 202-581-9355.

### 28th • 6:30 p.m.

Enjoy the annual Kwanza celebration at the Kennedy Center, featuring poetry reading, African dancing and music. The trip, sponsored by the Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service, costs \$20 and includes round-trip transportation and a ticket to the show. The bus will depart from 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. To reserve your seat, call 202-678-2800.

## January event

### January 16th • 10:30 a.m. to noon

A total wellness workshop is being hosted by Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service. Learn ways to stay healthy through the use of herbs, exercise and stress reduction techniques. This free event will be held at the center, 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. For more information, call 202-678-2800.

## Ongoing events

### 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month • 2 to 3 p.m.

The Coping with Memory Loss group offers support to seniors with early dementia. Members talk about the emotional impact on themselves and their loved ones at the IONA Senior Center, 4125 Albemarle St., N.W. No fee, but donations accepted. Registration required. The facilitator is Sean Hall. To register, call 202-895-9462 or shall@iona.org.

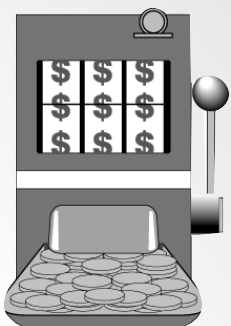
### Thursdays • 10 to 11:30 a.m.

The Low Vision Support Group meets at IONA Senior Center, 4125 Albemarle St., N.W. It focuses on emotional aspects of coping with vision loss. No fee, but donations accepted. The facilitators are Carlene Costello and Elly Waters. Registration is required. Call 202-895-9445 or e-mail: Ccostello@iona.org.

### Thursdays • 10 to 11:30 a.m.

The IONA Caregivers Support Group is open to all individuals providing primary care to a loved one suffering from chronic illness. No fee, but donations are accepted. The group will meet at IONA Senior Center, 4125 Albemarle St., N.W. The facilitators are Betsy Mathiasen and Margaret Johannsen. Call to register: 301-299-9022 or 202-332-9585.

# Try your luck!



**YMCA Senior Leisure Travelers**  
will spend two nights in **Dover Downs**  
**April 2 to 4, 2003.**

The total cost of **\$159 (double occupancy)**  
includes transportation.

A deposit of **\$15** is due on **December 15.**

Call Doris Baylor at **202-581-4007**  
to reserve your seat.

## SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

*Spotlight On Aging is published by the Information Office of the D.C. Office on Aging for D.C. senior residents.*

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